

## **Health Disparities**

### **--Highlights of Majority Leader Frist's Legislative Efforts--**

#### **AHealth Care Safety Net Amendments of 2001" (Public Law 107-251)**

Establishes the Healthy Communities Access Program (H-CAP), which includes grants for (1) developing patient-based research infrastructure at historically black medical schools; (2) establishing joint and collaborative programs of medical research and data collection between historically black medical schools and such providers, whose goal is to improve the health status of medically underserved populations; or (3) supporting the research-related costs of patient care, data collection, and academic training resulting from such affiliations.

#### **AMinority Health and Health Disparities Research and Education Act of 2000" (Public Law 106-525)**

Expands research and education on factors contributing to health disparities in minority and underserved populations. Established: (1) a National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NCMHD) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH); (2) a grant program through the new Center to further biomedical and behavioral research, education, and training; (3) an endowment program to facilitate minority and other health disparities research at centers of excellence institutions under section 736 with limited endowments; and (4) an extramural loan repayment program to train minorities as biomedical research professionals.

*In the slightly more than 2 years of the NCMHD, it has made awards totaling \$19 million to 26 biomedical and behavioral research institutions to develop a network of Centers of Excellence focused on community outreach, research and training in health disparities; provided more than \$63 million to help build endowments and improve research and training capacity at 15 schools focused on the training of underrepresented minority and socioeconomically disadvantaged individuals; issued more than \$5 million in loan repayment awards to more than 100 health professionals pursuing research careers in health disparity issues, 65% of whom come from health disparity populations; and provided \$2 million in loan repayment to 41 health professionals from disadvantaged backgrounds engaged in clinical research.*

#### **AThe Health Professions Education Partnerships Act of 1998" (Public Law 105-392)**

Health professionals who are minorities serve as important role models; may provide an additional level of comfort to patients of minority background; and are more apt to continue to practice in under served areas where they train. The bill provided training of minority and disadvantaged health professionals and improved minority representation in the health professions. The bill provided millions of dollars for schools of medicine or dentistry or pharmacy which enroll significant numbers of minority students. The bill provided millions of dollars for loan repayments; of which part were set aside for historically black colleges and universities, like Meharry Medical College.

*Annual funding for these key programs (the Minority Centers of Excellence Program, the Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students Program, and the Health Careers Opportunity Program) is approximately \$120 million. These programs are critical in helping health professions institutions increase the number of underrepresented minority students and faculty to achieve a culturally competent workforce, to increasing diversity in the health professions workforce by providing funds for scholarships targeted at financially needy students from disadvantaged background (many of whom are underrepresented minorities), and to increasing the number of individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds entering and graduating from health professions in order to increase diversity in the health professions workforce affecting improved access to health care.*